

bring much needed diversity to our Federal judiciary.

Given her varied professional background, years of appellate experience, and her accomplishments on the bench, Judge Thomas will be an excellent addition to the Ninth Circuit. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask my friend and colleague from Illinois, who is the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, if he could actually work with us—I have already reached out to him and some other Democrat Senators—on this very reasonable request. He has been here a lot longer than I have. But every time there is a Ninth Circuit judge who has been nominated, I have met with him because it is so important to my State. Alaska has 1 Ninth Circuit judge, and there are 29 judges on the court.

So I would ask, respectfully, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to work with me because this is a precedent that I don't think any Senator, Democrat or Republican, wants.

Literally, you are going to have the White House saying "You know what? You are not on the Judiciary Committee, so your advice-and-consent role under article II, section 2, is null and void" because the White House Counsel wants to "protect the judges"? Protect them from what?

So I want to work with my colleagues—all of them—particularly the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, as he has a lot of influence, I am sure, with the White House and the White House Counsel's Office, but, again, I encourage my colleagues to vote no until we start getting meetings and are able to do our duty. This is going to benefit my colleagues on both sides of the aisle over the long term, and it will strengthen this body, not weaken it, which is what is happening right now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me in closing say: I think we should be respectful and try to work with one another and cooperate. That also includes the over 100 nominees sitting on this calendar who have been obstructed by two or three Republican Members for weeks, if not months. If there is going to be fairness, let's make sure that the road travels in both directions.

I yield back all remaining time.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge the nomination of Holly A. Thomas, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

The yeas and nays have been previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 502 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Booker	Kelly	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Sinema
Carper	Lujan	Smith
Casey	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rubio
Boozman	Hoeven	Sasse
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Capito	Johnson	Shelby
Collins	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NOT VOTING—4

Cassidy	Lummis
Cramer	Rounds

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The nomination is discharged and will be placed on the calendar.

The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

FREEDOM TO VOTE ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak in support of legislation that is critical to our democracy—the Freedom to Vote Act. And this is a bill that was the product of work by many, many Senators from across the country with different views but all committed to one thing: our democracy.

And I want to thank Senator SCHUMER for bringing the group together as well as the other Senators: Senator MANCHIN, whose name is on the bill, whose experience as secretary of state really was so helpful to us in forming this bill and also realizing the differences between so many jurisdictions, including world jurisdictions, that have different staffing levels and different needs; Senator MERKLEY, an expert on election law; Senator PADILLA, also a former secretary of state; Senator KING, bringing his independent spirit from the State of Maine; Senator KAINE, former civil rights lawyer; Senator TESTER, who sees this and understands all of this firsthand in the

State of Montana, where, by the way, for decades they have had same-day registration, which when you look at the States, whether they are red or blue—States that have same-day registration, like my State—tend to have some of the highest voter turnouts in the country, and, sadly, they have disposed of that in the State of Montana recently; and Senator WARNOCK, from the great State of Georgia, who was the host, along with Senator OSSOFF, of a Rules Committee field hearing we recently held in Georgia, where we saw firsthand why so many leaders in the business community across the country and in Georgia have voiced their concern about a bill that recently passed there that would literally say that you cannot vote on weekends during the runoff period, during a critical period of votes in Georgia.

That was a group that came together, different views, different levels of experience, but all committed to one idea: that democracy will prevail.

The freedom to vote is fundamental to all of our freedoms. That is why this bill is called the Freedom to Vote Act. It ensures that people are part of the franchise and that government is accountable to the people, but this fundamental right that is the very foundation of our system of government is under attack.

Since the 2020 election, we have seen a persistent and coordinated assault on the freedom to vote in States across the country. These attacks on our democracy demand a Federal response. The Constitution anticipated that perhaps we would need a Federal response when, in the words of the Constitution, as written by our Founding Fathers, that Congress can make or alter the rules regarding Federal elections.

The need for action could not be more serious. It has been almost a year since the violent mob of insurrectionists stormed into this Chamber and desecrated our Capitol. They came into this very room, rifled through the desks, were up there right on the dais where the Presiding Officer now presides. They came here, but what they did was not just an attack on a building, it was an attack on our Republic—an attack on our Republic.

I still can picture it like it just happened. Senator BLUNT and I were the last two remaining Senators in the Chamber at 3:30 in the morning, along with the incredible staff from the Parliamentarian's office, with the pages, along with Vice President Pence, and the two young women with that mahogany box filled with the remaining electoral ballots. We made our way over to the House of Representatives, where glass was smashed against the sides, where there was still spray paint on statues and on columns, and we finished our job.

Two weeks later, as we stood on that inaugural stage—Democrat and Republican leaders from both parties from this Chamber, all the Senators from this Chamber, leaders nationally—Republicans, Democrats stood on that